

## Senate Resolution 21

By: Senators Kemp of the 46th, Grant of the 25th, Tate of the 38th and Hamrick of the 30th

**ADOPTED****A RESOLUTION**

Creating the Joint Early Learning Initiative Commission; and for other purposes.

WHEREAS, quality early care and learning opportunities for all children, especially for at-risk children from birth to five years of age, are essential to improving school performance for Georgia students; and

WHEREAS, the state has invested lottery proceeds, state funds, and federal funds in the Office of School Readiness and Georgia's Pre-K Program, for a total of \$360,959,969.00 in the 2004 budget adopted in the 2004 session; and

WHEREAS, there are proposals for delegation of authority and funding over certain federal early learning programs to the states; and

WHEREAS, a comprehensive review of early learning opportunities currently available that support health, social and emotional, cognitive and physical well being of children from birth to five years of age and recommendations for improvement of quality early care and learning opportunities would be helpful to the General Assembly in adopting education policies and appropriating funds for the most effective uses.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA that there is created the Joint Early Learning Initiative Commission to be composed of 21 members, including four members of the House of Representatives to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives and four members of the Senate to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Assignments. The Governor shall appoint seven members, including one member with expertise relating to early care and learning programs, one parent with a child enrolled in a pre-kindergarten program, one parent with a child currently enrolled in Head Start or Early Head Start, one representative from the child

care/early learning center community, one private provider pre-kindergarten instructor, one public school pre-kindergarten instructor, and one Head Start instructor. The Chancellor of the Board of Regents, the Commissioner of the Department of Technical Adult Education, the director of the Georgia Lottery Corporation, the director of the Georgia Student Finance Commission, the Georgia State School Superintendent or her designee, and the commissioner of Bright From the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning shall be ex-officio members of the commission. The Speaker of the House of Representatives shall designate a member of the House and the Senate Committee on Assignments shall designate a member of the Senate who shall serve as cochairpersons of the commission. The commission shall meet at the call of the cochairpersons.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the commission shall undertake a study of the following: issues relating to the anticipated action of the federal government in delegating authority relating to Head Start to the state; an examination of federal and state early learning programs to define efficiencies in each; options for combining federal and state programs if authority over federal funds and programs are delegated to the state; an investigation of early learning efforts statewide, including federal, state, and private programs to assess innovative approaches and to recommend effective practices; an investigation to develop and align early learning standards from birth to five years of age and from kindergarten through 12th grade, thus providing Georgia students with a seamless system of learning standards; investigate research that demonstrates that training and credentialing of early care and education teachers is critical to obtaining positive child outcomes and investigate and improve the professional development opportunities/system for early care and learning teachers by the creation of a statewide articulation agreement between community-based, tech school and colleges and universities that support the professional development of Georgia's early care and education teachers; possible expansion of early learning programs for at-risk three-year-olds; the creation of a statewide data base system that ensures a measure of accountability across state programs; an economic impact study that measures and demonstrates the value of federal, state, and local investments made in quality early care and education programs in Georgia; and the impact of an early education income tax credit for families with incomes under 200 percent of the federally designated poverty level that would allow low-income families to afford early education options that wealthier families can afford at institutions of their choice. The commission may recommend any actions or legislation which the commission deems necessary or appropriate. The commission may conduct such meetings at such places and at

such times as it may deem necessary or convenient to enable it to exercise fully and effectively its powers, perform its duties, and accomplish the objectives and purposes of this resolution. The members of the commission shall receive the allowances authorized for legislative members of interim legislative committees but shall receive the same for not more than three days unless additional days are authorized. The funds necessary to carry out the provisions of this resolution shall come from the funds appropriated to the House of Representatives and Senate. The Carl Vinson Institute at the University of Georgia is authorized and directed to provide staff services to the commission. In the event the commission makes a report of its findings and recommendations, with suggestions for proposed legislation, if any, such report shall be made on or before December 31, 2006. The commission shall stand abolished on December 31, 2006.